DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 395 838 SO 025 470

TITLE	Guidelines for Teaching about the Holocaust. Part 1. [Revised].
INSTITUTION	United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	94
NOTE	20p.; For related items, see SO 025 471 and SO 025 488.
AVAILABLE FROM	Education Department, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Pl., S.W., Washington, DC 20024-2150.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; Art Education; Art History; Culture; Ethnography; *Government Role; *History; *Jews; Language Arts; Middle Schools; Secondary Education; Social Studies; United States History; Visual Arts; World History; World Problems
IDENTIFIERS	*Holocaust

ABSTRACT

This pamphlet provides teachers with guidelines, historical information, and background information. One section included provides a teaching rationale, and "Methodological Considerations" provides thoughtful guides for a teacher to employ as curriculum is developed. Sample rationale statements and methodological approaches are given for incorporating a study of the Holocaust in seven different courses: (1) United States History; (2) World History; (3) World Cultures; (4) Government; (5) Contemporary World Problems; (6) Literature; and (7) Art and Art History. (DQE)

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Guidelines for Teaching about the Holocaust

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SO 025 470

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Washington, DC

Third Revised Printing, June 1994

Guidelines for Teaching about the Holocaust

The primary mission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is to promote education about the history of the Holocaust and its implications for our lives today. This pamphlet is intended to assist educators who are preparing to teach Holocaust studies and related subjects.

Why Teach Holocaust History?

The history of the Holocaust represents one of the most effective, and most extensively documented, subjects for a pedagogical examination of basic moral issues. A structured inquiry into Holocaust history yields critical lessons for an investigation of human behavior. A study of the Holocaust also addresses one of the central tenets of education in the United States which is to examine what it means to be a responsible citizen. Through a study of the Holocaust, students can come to realize that:

- democratic institutions and values are not automatically sustained, but need to be appreciated, nurtured, and protected;
- silence and indifference to the suffering of others, or to the infringement of civil rights in any society, can—however, unintentionally—serve to perpetuate the problems; and
- the Holocaust was not an accident in history—it occurred because individuals, organizations, and governments made choices which not only legalized discrimination, but which allowed prejudice, hatred, and ultimately, mass murder to occur.

Questions of Rationale

Because the objective of teaching any subject is to engage the intellectual curiosity of the student in order to inspire critical thought and personal growth, it is helpful to structure your lesson plan on the Holocaust by considering throughout questions of rationale. Before addressing what and how to teach, we would recommend that you contemplate the following:

- Why should students learn this history?
- What are the most significant lessons students can learn about the Holocaust?
- Why is a particular reading, image, document, or film an appropriate medium for conveying the lessons about the Holocaust which you wish to teach?

Among the various rationales offered by educators who have incorporated a study of the Holocaust into their various courses and disciplines are these:

- The Holocaust was a watershed event, not only in the 20th century, but in the entire history of humanity.

- Study of the Holocaust assists students in developing understanding of the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping in any society. It helps students develop an awareness of the value of pluralism, and encourages tolerance of diversity in a pluralistic society.
- The Holocaust provides a context for exploring the dangers of remaining silent, apathetic, and indifferent in the face of others' oppression.
- Holocaust history demonstrates how a modern nation can utilize its technological expertise and bureaucratic infrastructure to implement destructive policies ranging from social engineering to genocide.
- A study of the Holocaust helps students think about the use and abuse of power, and the role and responsibilities of individuals, organizations, and nations when confronted with civil rights violations and/or policies of genocide.
- As students gain insight into the many historical, social, religious, political, and economic factors which cumulatively resulted in the Holocaust, they gain a perspective on how history happens, and how a convergence of factors can contribute to the disintegration of civilized values. Part of one's responsibility as a citizen in a democracy is to learn to identify the danger signals, and to know when to react.

When you, as an educator, take the time to consider the rationale for your lesson on the Holocaust, you will be more likely to select content that speaks to your students' interests and which provides them with a clearer understanding of the history. Most students demonstrate a high level of interest in studying the Holocaust precisely because the subject raises questions of fairness, justice, individual identity, peer pressure, conformity, indifference, and obedience—issues which adolescents confront in their daily lives. Students are also struck by the magnitude of the Holocaust, and the fact that so many people acting as collaborators, perpetrators, and bystanders allowed this genocide to occur by failing to protest or resist.

Methodological Considerations

1. Define what you mean by "Holocaust."

The Holocaust refers to a specific event in 20th century history: The systematic, bureaucratic annihilation of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and their collaborators as a central act of state during World War II. In 1933 approximately nine million Jews lived in the 21 countries of Europe that would be occupied by Germany during the war. By 1945 two out of every three of these European Jews had been killed. Although Jews were the primary victims, up to one half million Gypsies and at least 250,000 mentally or physically disabled persons were also victims of Nazi genocide. As Nazi tyranny spread across Europe from 1933 to 1945, millions of other innocent people were persecuted and murdered. More than three million Soviet prisoners of war were killed because of their nationality. Poles, as well as other Slavs, were targeted for slave labor, and as a result tens of thousands perished. Homosexuals and others deemed "anti-social" were also persecuted and often murdered. In addition, thousands of political and religious dissidents such as communists, socialists, trade unionists, and Jehovah's Witnesses were persecuted for their beliefs and behavior and many of these individuals died as a result of maltreatment.

2. Avoid comparisons of pain.

A study of the Holocaust should always highlight the different policies carried out by the Nazi regime towards various groups of people; however, these distinctions should not be presented as a basis for comparison of suffering between them. Avoid generalizations which suggest exclusivity, such as "the victims of the Holocaust suffered the most cruelty ever faced by a people in the history of humanity." One cannot presume that the horror of an individual, family or community destroyed by the Nazis was any greater than that experienced by victims of other genocides.

3. Avoid simple answers to complex history.

A study of the Holocaust raises difficult questions about human behavior, and it often involves complicated answers as to why events occurred. Be wary of oversimplifications. Allow students to contemplate the various factors which contributed to the Holocaust; do not attempt to reduce Holocaust history to one or two catalysts in isolation from the other factors which came into play. For example, the Holocaust was not simply the logical and inevitable consequence of unbridled racism. Rather, racism, combined with centuries-old bigotry, renewed by a nationalistic fervor which emerged in Europe in the latter half of the 19th century, fueled by Germany's defeat in World War I and its national humiliation following the Treaty of Versailles, exacerbated by worldwide economic hard times, the ineffectiveness of the Weimar Republic, and international indifference, and catalyzed by the political charisma, militaristic inclusiveness, and manipulative propaganda of Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime, contributed to the eventuality of the Holocaust.

4. Just because it happened, does not mean it was inevitable.

Too often, students have the simplistic impression that the Holocaust was inevitable. Just because an historical event took place, and it was documented in textbooks and on film, does not mean that it had to happen. This seemingly obvious concept is often overlooked by students and teachers alike. The Holocaust took place because individuals, groups, and nations made decisions to act or not to act. By focusing on those decisions, we gain insight into history and human nature, and we can better help our students to become critical thinkers.

5. Strive for precision of language.

Any study of the Holocaust touches upon nuances of human behavior. Because of the complexity of the history, there is a temptation to overgeneralize and thus to distort the facts (e.g., "all concentration camps were killing centers" or "all Germans were collaborators"). Rather, teachers must strive to help students distinguish between categories of behavior and relevant historical references; to clarify the differences between prejudice and discrimination, collaborators and bystanders, armed and spiritual resistance, direct orders and assumed orders, concentration camps and killing centers, and guilt and responsibility.

Words that describe human behavior often have multiple meanings. Resistance, for example, usually refers to a physical act of armed revolt. During the Holocaust, it also meant partisan activism that ranged from smuggling messages, food, and weapons to actual military engagement. But, resistance also embraced willful disobedience: continuing to practice religious and cultural traditions in defiance of the rules; creating fine art, music and poetry inside ghettos and concentration camps. For many, simply maintaining the will to remain alive in the face of abject brutality was the surest act of spiritual resistance.

6. Make careful distinctions about sources of information.

Students need practice in distinguishing between fact, opinion, and fiction; between primary and secondary sources, and between types of evidence such as court testimonies, oral histories, and other written documents. Hermeneutics—the science of interpretation—should be called into play to help guide your students in their analysis of sources. Students should be encouraged to consider why a particular text was written, who the intended audience was, whether there were any biases inherent in the information, any gaps in discussion, whether gaps in certain passages were inadvertent or not, and how the information has been used to interpret various events.

Because scholars often base their research on different bodies of information, varying interpretations of history can emerge. Consequently, all interpretations are subject to analytical evaluation. Only by refining their own "hermeneutic of suspicion" can students mature into readers who discern the difference between legitimate scholars who present competing historical interpretations, and those who distort or deny historical fact for personal or political gain.

7. Try to avoid stereotypical descriptions.

Though all Jews were targeted for destruction by the Nazis, the experiences of all Jews were not the same. Simplistic views and stereotyping take place when groups of people are viewed as monolithic in attitudes and actions. How ethnic groups or social clusters are labeled and portrayed in school curricula has a direct impact on how students perceive groups in their daily lives. Remind your students that although members of a group may share common experiences and beliefs, generalizations about them, without benefit of modifying or qualifying terms (e.g., "sometimes," "usually," "in many cases but not all") tend to stereotype group behavior and distort historical reality. Thus, all Germans cannot be characterized as Nazis, nor should any nationality be reduced to a singular or one-dimensional description.

8. Do not romanticize history to engage students' interest.

One of the great risks of Holocaust education is the danger of fostering cynicism in our students by exposing them to the worst of human nature. Regardless, accuracy of fact must be a teacher's priority. People who risked their lives to rescue victims of Nazi oppression provide useful and important role models for students, yet an overemphasis on heroic tales in a unit on the Holocaust results in an inaccurate and unbalanced account of the history. It is important to bear in mind that "at best, less than one-half of one percent of the total population [of non-Jews] under Nazi occupation helped to rescue Jews." [Oliner and Oliner, 1991, p. 363]

9. Contextualize the history you are teaching.

Events of the Holocaust, and particularly how individuals and organizations behaved at that time, must be placed in an historical context so that students can begin to comprehend the circumstances that encouraged or discouraged these acts. Frame your approach to specific events and acts of complicity or defiance by considering when and where an act took place; the immediate consequences to oneself and one's family of assisting victims; the impact of contemporaneous events; the degree of control the Nazis had on a country or local population; the cultural attitudes of particular native populations historically toward different victim groups, and the availability, effectiveness, and risk of potential hiding places.

Students should be reminded that individuals and groups do not always fit neatly into the same categories of behavior. The very same people did not always act consistently as "bystanders," "collaborators," "perpetrators," or "rescuers." Individuals and groups often behaved differently depending upon changing events and circumstances. The same person who in 1933 might have stood by and remained uninvolved while witnessing social discrimination of Jews, might later have joined up with the SA and become a collaborator or have been moved to dissent vocally or act in defense of Jewish friends and neighbors.

Encourage your students not to categorize groups of people only on the basis of their experiences during the Holocaust: contextualization is critical so that victims are not perceived only as victims. Although Jews were the central victims of the Nazi regime, they had a vibrant culture and long history in Europe prior to the Nazi era. By exposing students to some of the cultural contributions and achievements of two thousand years of European Jewish life, you help students to balance their perception of Jews as victims and to better appreciate the traumatic disruption in Jewish history caused by the Holocaust.

Similarly, students may know very little about Gypsies, except for the negative images and derogatory descriptions promulgated by the Nazis. Students would benefit from a broader viewpoint, learning something about Gypsy history and culture, and understanding the diverse ways of life among different Gypsy groups.

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10. Translate statistics into people.

In any study of the Holocaust, the sheer number of victims challenges easy comprehension. Teachers need to show that individual people are behind the statistics, comprised of families of grandparents, parents, and children. First-person accounts and memoir literature provide students with a way of making meaning out of collective numbers. Although students should be careful about overgeneralizing from first-person accounts such as those from survivors, journalists, relief workers, bystanders, and liberators, personal accounts can supplement a study of genocide by moving it "from a welter of statistics, remote places and events, to one that is immersed in the 'personal' and 'particular.'" [Totten, 1987, p. 63]

11. Be sensitive to appropriate written and audio-visual content.

One of the primary concerns of educators is how to introduce students to the horrors of the Holocaust. Graphic material should be used in a judicious manner and only to the extent necessary to achieve the objective of the lesson. Teachers should remind themselves that each student and each class is different, and that what seems appropriate for one may not be for all.

Students are essentially a "captive audience." When we assault them with images of horror for which they are unprepared, we violate a basic trust: the obligation of a teacher to provide a "safe" learning environment. The assumption that all students will seek to understand human behavior after being exposed to horrible images is fallacious. Some students may be so appalled by images of brutality and mass murder that they are discouraged from studying the subject further; others may become fascinated in a more voyeuristic fashion, subordinating further critical analysis of the history to the superficial titillation of looking at images of starvation, disfigurement, and death. Many events and deeds that occurred within the context of the Holocaust do not rely for their depiction directly on the graphic horror of mass killings or other barbarisms. It is recommended that images and texts that do not exploit either the victims' memories or the students' emotional vulnerability form the centerpiece of Holocaust curricula.

12. Strive for balance in establishing whose perspective informs your study of the Holocaust.

Often, too great an emphasis is placed on the victims of Nazi aggression, rather than on the victimizers who forced people to make impossible choices or simply left them with no choice to make. Most students express empathy for victims of mass murder. But, it is not uncommon for students to assume that the victims may have done something to justify the actions against them, and thus to place inappropriate blame on the victims themselves.

There is also a tendency among students to glorify power, even when it is used to kill innocent people. Many teachers indicate that their students are intrigued and in some cases, intellectually seduced, by the symbols of power which pervaded Nazi propaganda (e.g., the swastika, Nazi flags and regalia, Nazi slogans, rituals, and music). Rather than highlight the trappings of Nazi power, teachers should ask students to evaluate how such elements are used by governments (including our own) to build, protect, and mobilize a society. Students should be encouraged to contemplate as well how such elements can be abused and manipulated by governments to implement and legitimize acts of terror and even genocide.

In any review of the propaganda used to promote Nazi ideology, Nazi stereotypes of targeted victim groups, and the Hitler regime's justifications for persecution and murder, teachers need to remind students that just because such policies and beliefs are under discussion in class does not mean they are acceptable. It would be a terrible irony if students arrived at such a conclusion.

Furthermore, any study of the Holocaust should address both the victims and the perpetrators of violence, and attempt to portray each as human beings, capable of moral judgment and independent decision-making but challenged by circumstances which made both self-defense and independent thought not merely difficult but perilous and potentially lethal.

13. Select appropriate learning activities.

Just because students favor a certain learning activity does not necessarily mean that it should be used. For example, such activities as word scrambles, crossword puzzles, and other gimmicky exercises tend not to encourage critical analysis, but lead instead to low level types of thinking and, in the case of Holocaust curricula, trivialize the importance of studying this history. When the effects of a particular activity run counter to the rationale for studying the history, then that activity should not be used.

Similarly, activities that encourage students to construct models of killing camps should also be reconsidered since any assignment along this line will almost inevitably end up being simplistic, time-consuming, and tangential to the educational objectives for studying the history of the Holocaust.

Thought-provoking learning activities are preferred, but even here, there are pitfalls to avoid. In studying complex human behavior, many teachers rely upon simulation exercises meant to help students "experience" unfamiliar situations. Even when teachers take great care to prepare a class for such an activity, simulating experiences from the Holocaust remains pedagogically unsound. The activity may engage students, but they often forget the purpose of the lesson, and even worse, they are left with the impression at the conclusion of the activity that they now know what it was like during the Holocaust.

Holocaust survivors and eyewitnesses are among the first to indicate the grave difficulty of finding words to describe their experiences. Even more revealing, they argue the virtual impossibility of trying to simulate accurately what it was like to live on a daily basis with fear, hunger, disease, unfathomable loss, and the unrelenting threat of abject brutality and death.

The problem with trying to simulate situations from the Holocaust is that complex events and actions are over-simplified, and students are left with a skewed view of history. Since there are numerous primary source accounts, both written and visual, as well as survivors and eyewitnesses who can describe actual choices faced and made by individuals, groups, and nations during this period, teachers should draw upon these resources and refrain from simulation games that lead to a trivialization of the subject matter.

If they are not attempting to recreate situations from the Holocaust, simulation activities can be used effectively, especially when they have been designed to explore varying aspects of human behavior such as fear, scapegoating, conflict resolution, and difficult decision-making. Asking students in the course of a discussion, or as part of a writing assignment, to consider various perspectives on a particular event or historical experience is fundamentally different from involving a class in a simulation game.

14. Reinforce the objectives of your lesson plan.

As in all teaching situations, the opening and closing lessons are critically important. A strong opening should serve to dispel misinformation students may have prior to studying the Holocaust. It should set a reflective tone, move students from passive to active learners, indicate to students that their ideas and opinions matter, and establish that this history has multiple ramifications for themselves as individuals and as members of society as a whole.

A strong closing should emphasize synthesis by encouraging students to connect this history to other world events as well as the world they live in today. Students should be encouraged to reflect on what they have learned and to consider what this study means to them personally and as citizens of a democracy. Most importantly, your closing lesson should encourage further examination of Holocaust history, literature, and art.

Incorporating a Study of the Holocaust into Existing Courses

The Holocaust can be effectively integrated into various existing courses within the school curriculum. This section presents sample rationale statements and methodological approaches for incorporating a study of the Holocaust in seven different courses. Each course synopsis constitutes a mere fraction of the various rationales and approaches currently used by educators. Often, the rationales and methods listed under one course can be applied as well to other courses.

United States History

Although the history of the United States is introduced at various grade levels throughout most school curricula, all states require students to take a course in United States history at the high school level. Including a study of the Holocaust into U.S. History courses can encourage students to:

- examine the dilemmas that arise when foreign policy goals are narrowly defined, as solely in terms of the national interest, thus denying the validity of universal moral and human priorities;
- understand what happens when parliamentary democratic institutions fail;
- examine the responses of governmental and non-governmental organizations in the United States to the plight of Holocaust victims (e.g., the Evian Conference, the debate over the Wagner-Rogers bill to assist refugee children, the ill-fated voyage of the S.S. St. Louis, the Emergency Rescue Committee, the rallies and efforts of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, and the decision by the U.S. not to bomb the railroad lines leading into Auschwitz);
- explore the role of American and Allied soldiers in liberating victims from Nazi concentration camps and killing centers, using, for example, first-person accounts of liberators to ascertain their initial responses to, and subsequent reflections about, what they witnessed; and
- examine the key role played by the U.S. in bringing Nazi perpetrators to trial at Nuremberg and in other war crimes trials.

Since most history and social studies teachers in the United States rely upon standard textbooks, they can incorporate the Holocaust into regular units of study such as the Great Depression, World War II, and the Cold War. Questions which introduce Holocaust studies into these subject areas include:

1. ***The Great Depression:*** How did the U.S. respond to the Depression? How were U.S. electoral politics influenced by the Depression? What were the immediate consequences of the Depression on the European economic and political system established by the Versailles Treaty of 1919? What was the impact of the Depression upon the electoral strength of the Nazi party in Germany? Was the Depression a contributing factor to the Nazis' rise to power?

2. ***World War II:*** What was the relationship between the U.S. and Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1939? How did the actions of Nazi Germany influence U.S. foreign policy? What was the response of the U.S. Government and non-governmental organizations to the unfolding events of the Holocaust? What was the role of the U.S. in the war crimes trials?

3. ***The Cold War:*** How did the rivalries between the World War II allies influence American attitudes toward former Nazis? What was the position of America's European allies toward members of the former Nazi regime?

World History

Although various aspects of world history are incorporated throughout school curricula, most students are not required to take World History courses. It is in the context of World History courses, however, that the Holocaust is generally taught. Inclusion of the Holocaust in a World History course helps students to:

- examine events, deeds, and ideas in European history that contributed to the Holocaust, such as the history of antisemitism in Europe, 19th century race science, the rise of German nationalism, the defeat of Germany in World War I, and the failure of the Weimar Republic to govern successfully;
- reflect upon the idea that civilization has been progressing [one possible exercise might be to have students develop a definition of "civilization" in class, and then have them compare and contrast Nazi claims for the "1000 Year Reich" with the actual policies they employed to realize that vision; the dissonance raised in such a lesson helps students to see that government policies can encompass evil, particularly when terror and brute force crush dissent];
- explore how the various policies of the Nazi regime were interrelated (e.g., the connections between establishing a totalitarian government, carrying out racial policies, and waging war); and
- reflect upon the moral and ethical implications of the Nazi era as a watershed in world history (e.g., the systematic planning and implementation of a government policy to kill millions of people; the use of technological advances to carry out mass slaughter; the role of Nazi collaborators, and the role of bystanders around the world who chose not to intervene in the persecution and murder of Jews and other victims).

Once again, since most teachers of European history rely upon standard textbooks and a chronological approach, teachers may wish to incorporate the Holocaust into the following, standardized units of study in European History: the Aftermath of World War I; the Rise of Dictators; the World at War, 1939–45, and the Consequences of War. Questions which introduce Holocaust studies into these subject areas include:

1. ***The Aftermath of World War I:*** What role did the Versailles Treaty play in the restructuring of European and world politics? How did the reconfiguration of Europe following World War I influence German national politics in the period 1919–33?

2. ***The Rise of the Dictators:*** What factors led to the rise of totalitarian regimes in Europe in the period between the two world wars? How was antisemitism used by the Nazis and other regimes (Hungary, Romania, U.S.S.R.) to justify totalitarian measures?

3. ***The World at War, 1939–45:*** Why has the Holocaust often been called a "war within the war?" How did the Holocaust affect Nazi military decisions? Why might it be "easier" to commit genocidal acts during wartime than during a period of relative peace?

4. ***The Consequences of War:*** What was the connection between World War II and the formation of the State of Israel? Was a new strain of international morality introduced with the convening of the Nuremberg Tribunals? How did the Cold War impact the fate of former Nazis?

World Cultures

A course on World Cultures incorporates knowledge from both the humanities and the social sciences into a study of cultural patterns and social institutions of various societies. A study of the Holocaust in a World Cultures course helps students:

- examine conflicts arising between majority and minority groups in a specific cultural sphere (Europe between 1933–45);
- further their understanding of how a government can use concepts such as culture, ethnicity, race, diversity, and nationality as weapons to persecute, murder, and annihilate people;
- analyze the extent to which cultures are able to survive and maintain their traditions and institutions, when faced with threats to their very existence (e.g., retaining religious practices, recording eyewitness accounts, and hiding cultural symbols and artifacts); and
- apply understandings gleaned from an examination of the Holocaust to genocides which have occurred in other cultural spheres.

Government

Government courses at the high school level usually focus on understanding the U.S. political system, comparative studies of various governments, and the international relationship of nations. The Holocaust can be incorporated into a study of government in order to demonstrate how the development of public policy can become directed to genocidal ends when dissent and debate are silenced. Inclusion of Holocaust studies in Government courses helps students:

- compare governmental systems (e.g., by investigating how the Weimar Constitution in Germany prior to the Nazi seizure of power was similar to, or different from, the Constitution of the United States; by comparing the Nazi system of governance with that of the United States);

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- study the process of how a state can degenerate from a (parliamentary) democracy into a totalitarian state (e.g., by examining the processes by which the Nazis gained absolute control of the German government and how the Nazi government then controlled virtually all segments of German society);
- examine how the development of public policy can lead to genocidal ends, especially when people remain silent in face of discriminatory practices (e.g., the development of Nazi racial and genocide policies towards Jews and other victim groups beginning with the philosophical platform elaborated in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, continuing through the state-imposed Nuremberg Laws, and culminating with governmental policies of murder and extermination after 1941);
- examine the role of Nazi bureaucracy in implementing policies of murder and annihilation (e.g., the development and maintenance of a system to identify, isolate, deport, enslave, and kill targeted people, and then redistribute their remaining belongings);
- examine the role of various individuals in the rise and fall of a totalitarian government (e.g., those who supported Nazi Germany, those who were passive, and those who resisted both internally, such as partisans and others who carried out revolts, and externally, such as the Allies); and
- recognize that among the legacies of the Holocaust have been the creation of the United Nations in 1945, and its ongoing efforts to develop and adopt numerous, significant human rights bills (e.g., the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights and the U.N. Convention on Genocide).

Contemporary World Problems

Many schools include a Contemporary World Problems course at the senior high level which allows students to conduct an in-depth study of a topic such as genocide. The focus is usually on what constitutes genocide, and areas of investigation include various preconditions, patterns, consequences, and methods of intervention and prevention of genocide. A study of the Holocaust in Contemporary World Problems curricula can help students to:

- comprehend the similarities and differences between governmental policies during the Holocaust and contemporary policies that create the potential for ethnocide or genocide (e.g., comparing and contrasting the philosophy and/or policies of the Nazi regime with that of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia);
- compare and contrast the world response of governments and non-governmental organizations to the Holocaust with the responses of governments and non-governmental organizations to mass killings today (e.g., comparing the decisions made at the Evian Conference in 1938, to the U.S. response to the Cambodian genocide between

1974–1979, or the response of non-governmental organizations like the International Red Cross to the Nazi genocide of Jews during the Holocaust with that of Amnesty International to political killings in Argentina, Guatemala, Indonesia, and Cambodia in contemporary times); and

- analyze the relationship of the Holocaust and its legacy to the formation of the State of Israel.

Literature

Literature is read in English classes across grade levels and is also used to enhance and strengthen social studies and science courses. The literature curriculum is generally organized thematically or around categories such as American Literature, British Literature, European Literature, and World Literature. Literature is capable of providing thought-provoking perspectives on a myriad of subjects and concerns which can engage students in ways that standard textbooks and essays do not.

Holocaust literature encompasses a variety of literary genres including novels, short stories, drama, poetry, diaries, and memoirs. This broad spectrum gives teachers a wide range of curriculum choices. Because Holocaust literature derives from a true-to-life epic in human history, its stories reveal basic truths about human nature, and provide adolescent readers with credible models of heroism and dignity. At the same time, it compels them to confront the reality of the human capacity for evil.

Because so many of the stories intersect with issues in students' own lives, Holocaust literature can inspire a commitment to reject indifference to human suffering, and can instruct them about relevant social issues such as the effects of intolerance and elitism. Studying literary responses to the Holocaust helps students:

- develop a deeper respect for human decency by asking them to confront the moral depravity and the extent of Nazi evil (e.g., the abject cruelty of the Nazi treatment of victims even prior to the round-ups and deportations, the event of Kristallnacht, the deportations in boxcars, the mass killings, and the so-called medical experiments of Nazi doctors);

- recognize the deeds of heroism demonstrated by teenagers and adults in ghettos and concentration camps (e.g., the couriers who smuggled messages, goods, and weapons in and out of the Warsaw Ghetto, the partisans who used arms to resist the Nazis, and the uprisings and revolts in various ghettos including Warsaw and in killing centers such as Treblinka);

- explore the spiritual resistance evidenced in literary responses which portray the irrepressible dignity of people who transcended the evil of their murderers, as found, for example, in the clandestine writing of diaries, poetry, and plays;

- recognize the different roles which were assumed or thrust upon people during the Holocaust, such as victim, oppressor, bystander, and rescuer;
- examine the moral choices, or absence of choices, which were confronted by both young and old, victim and perpetrator; and
- analyze the corruption of language cultivated by the Nazis, particularly in the use of euphemisms to mask their evil intent (e.g., their use of the terms "emigration" for expulsion, "evacuation" for deportation, "deportation" for transportation to concentration camps and killing centers, "police actions" for round-ups that typically led to mass murder, and "Final Solution" for the planned annihilation of every Jew in Europe).

Art and Art History

One of the goals for studying art history is to enable students to understand the role of art in society. The Holocaust can be incorporated into a study of art and art history to illuminate how the Nazis used art for propagandistic purposes, and how victims used artistic expression to communicate their protest, despair, and/or hope. A study of art during the Holocaust helps students:

- analyze the motivations for, and implications of, the Nazi's censorship activities in the fine and literary arts, theater, and music (e.g., the banning of books and certain styles of painting and the May 1933 book burnings);
- examine the values and beliefs of the Nazis and how the regime perceived the world, by, for example, examining Nazi symbols of power, Nazi propaganda posters, paintings, and drawings deemed "acceptable" rather than "degenerate;"
- study how people living under Nazi control used art as a form of resistance (e.g., examining the extent to which the victims created art, the dangers they faced in doing so, the various forms of art that were created and the settings in which they were created, and the diversity of themes and content in this artistic expression);
- examine art created by Holocaust victims and survivors and explore its capacity to document diverse experiences including life prior to the Holocaust, life inside the ghettos, the deportations, and the myriad of experiences in the concentration camp system; and
- examine interpretations of the Holocaust as expressed in contemporary art, art exhibitions, and memorials.

Conclusion

A study of the Holocaust can be effectively integrated into any number of subject areas. Sample curricula and lesson plans, currently in use around the country, have been collected by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and are available for reference purposes. For further information on the range of materials available, and how to acquire copies of these materials for your own use in developing or enhancing study units on the Holocaust, please contact the Education Department, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW, Washington, DC 20024-2150; telephone: (202) 488-0400.

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Acknowledgements

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William S. Parsons, Director of Education, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (U.S.H.M.M.); and

Samuel Totten, Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

We would also like to acknowledge editorial suggestions made by:

Helen Fagin, Chair, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council Education Committee;

Sara J. Bloomfield, Director of Public Programs (U.S.H.M.M.);

Alice M. Greenwald, Consultant (U.S.H.M.M.);

Stephen Feinberg, Social Studies Department Chairman, Wayland Middle School, Wayland, MA;

William R. Fernekes, Social Studies Supervisor, Hunterdon Central Regional High School, Flemington, NJ;

Grace M. Caporino, Advanced Placement English Teacher, Carmel High School, Carmel, NY; and

Kristy L. Brosius, Resource Center Coordinator (U.S.H.M.M.).

NOTES

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1994 302-067/27801

UNITED STATES
HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

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